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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/27/2012
TAGS: PREL YI AL BE
SUBJECT: BELGIAN FM TAKES TOUGH LINE ON KOSOVO WITH SERB
COUNTERPART

Classified By: Political Counselor Theodore H Andrews, reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d)

¶1. (C) During a June 27, 2007 meeting in Brussels with Serbian FM Jeremik, Belgian FM De Gucht urged the Serb leadership to adopt a "realistic approach" to the Kosovo independence issue. An official in De Gucht's cabinet who was present at the meeting said De Gucht pushed Jeremik to use the current "pause" of four months to launch serious discussions with the Kosovars, something they had failed to do so far. While De Gucht did not want to prejudge the outcome of any such talks, he noted that the international community was ready to act with or without the Serbs. The Belgian FM made many of these points publicly during a brief session with Serbian journalists.

¶2. (C) Jeremik did not reply directly to De Gucht's points, according to our contact. Instead, he stressed the importance his party placed on educating the Serb population and to demonstrating the tangible benefits of a stronger connection to Europe. The list of such benefits is long, our source said, but it included easier access to visas and EU membership. Jeremik wanted to reach that goal by 2012, or to have experienced steady progress.

¶3. (C) The Belgians reportedly told Jeremik that his dreams would "remain dreams" if they did not begin to "fill some of the empty rooms" waiting for war criminals in The Hague. Given the EU's experience with the Cyprus issue, no one wanted to admit a new member state with so much additional baggage. Fox

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